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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: LIEN CHAN'S CHINA TRIP

¶1. Summary: While the Taipei dailies continued to report April 28 on the aftermath of the violent clashes that took place at CKS International Airport between Pan-Blue and Pan-Green supporters Tuesday when KMT Chairman Lien Chan departed for his trip to China, newspapers also focused on the meeting scheduled for Friday between Lien and Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing. The pro-unification "United Daily News" said on its front page: "Hu Jintao will meet with Lien Chan and will propose to offer a Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement [with Taiwan]." The centrist "China Times" carried a banner headline on its page four that read: "Lien will fly to Beijing today and will meet with Hu Jintao tomorrow." The sub-headline added: "Peace and trade will be the focus of [Lien-Hu] meeting. It is expected that Hu will offer a concrete response to the idea of [establishing] a 'common market across the Taiwan Strait' and will agree to Taiwan's bid to join the WHO in a private capacity." Taiwan's biggest daily, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," in the meantime carried a news story on its second page that quoted President Chen Shui-bian as saying that he hopes Beijing will take Taiwan's existence seriously and believes that Taiwan and China will move further apart if China seeks to play a dual role as both a "mediator" and a "punisher."

¶2. A "Liberty Times" editorial continued its strong criticism of Lien's trip and said Lien, when meeting with Hu, should fearlessly demand that China destroy all its missiles aimed at Taiwan and abolish the Anti-Secession Law. It would be a true journey of peace and Lien would be a true follower of Sun Yat-sen if he does that, the editorial said; if he does not, the editorial said, he is simply a political liar. A pro-unification "United Daily News" editorial, on the other hand, called the meeting between Lien and Hu tomorrow a critical opportunity that happens only once in a lifetime. The editorial called on both Lien and Hu to work and create a "common prospect" for both sides of the Taiwan Strait. An op-ed in the centrist "China Times" discussed the U.S. role in cross-Strait relations and concluded that the U.S. influence on both sides is increasing rather than diminishing. End summary.

A) "[If] Lien Chan Fails to Accomplish [His] Historical Achievement, He Will Become a Public Enemy of the People on Both Sides of the Taiwan Strait"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (4/28):

". Lien's mentioning about [KMT founder] Sun Yat-sen's will of 'peace, striving and saving China' [during his China trip] was not only a result of confusion of time and place but also of values. Today, China and Taiwan are two separate countries. Regardless of the question whether China needs to be 'saved,' it really has nothing to do with the Taiwan people even if China needs to be saved. In particular, China is the real chief offender that has created the severe situation across the Taiwan Strait, and we should first 'save Taiwan' rather than 'save China.' In other words, how to save Taiwan from being intimidated by China's dictatorship; how to save Taiwan's economy from being dried out by China; how to save Taiwan people's democratic and free lives from being sabotaged by China, and how to save Taiwan's independent sovereignty from being violated by China are the issues that need to be resolved as a top priority. Since Lien touted his China trip as a 'journey of peace' and he was promoting the peaceful will of Sun Yat-sen, he should then justly and fearlessly protest to Chinese leader Hu Jintao about [Taiwan people's displeasure], demanding that China destroy all the missiles that it deployed and aimed at Taiwan and abolish the Anti-Secession Law which authorized it to use force against Taiwan. Only by doing that can Lien can his trip a real journey of

peace and himself a true believer of Sun Yat-sen, or he is simply a political liar. ."

B) "Tomorrow' Lien-Hu Meeting: Not to Miss this Critical Opportunity Once in a Lifetime!"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] commented in its editorial (4/28):

". Therefore, for those on both sides of the Taiwan Strait who have a mind to [improve cross-Strait relations], they must be watchful for the fragile part of [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's China trip despite its seemingly glorious appearance. The difficult part of the issue lies in: Taiwan cannot possibly find a way out for the island by neglecting mainland China, and China cannot resolve the Taiwan issue by adopting the measure that would destroy both sides indiscriminately. Lien said he hopes he could find a prospect for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. What he meant was that it must be a prospect for Taiwan and for mainland China, or it cannot be called as a 'common prospect for people of both sides of the Taiwan Strait.'

"During his first two day's trip, Lien seemed to have started a very cautious probe. The Beijing authorities, on the other hand, have offered Lien positive leeway and response. .

"In an attempt to resolve the 'severe impasse' across the Taiwan Strait as referred to by Lien, Beijing should have greater tolerance while Taiwan should learn to be more coherent. Only this way can both sides of the Taiwan Strait build a peaceful and stable framework for interactive development. Lien's probe may be implicit but his intention is very clear. Now it all depends how [Chinese President] Hu Jintao will respond at his meeting with Lien tomorrow. Hu's response is not addressed to Lien alone, but it also points out a common prospect for both sides of the Taiwan Strait."

C) "U.S. Role Remains in Cross-Strait Relations"

Chen Chung-chih, research assistant of Taiwan's Prospect Foundation, said in an op-ed in the centrist "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] (4/28)

". For the United States, it has constantly sent out signals since last year-end hoping that both sides could resume dialogue. In the face of the stalemated cross-Strait relations, Washington believes that the best way is to have both sides of the Taiwan Strait engage directly in a dialogue. Thus, [we can say] the United States is playing the role as an invisible but solid mediator that proactively pushes both sides to resume talks.

"But such a role played by the United States started to change early this year; namely, even though the ruling party [of Taiwan] strongly criticized the opposition leaders' trips to China, the State Department still clearly indicated a supportive attitude, emphasizing that some Taiwan individuals' recent trips to China are a positive step. In other words, the focus of Washington's attention lies in how to make Beijing and Taipei maintain a channel for dialogue and adopt measures that are acceptable for both sides and effective for alleviating tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

"Thus, once both sides of the Taiwan Strait resume dialogue, the United States will no longer stand on the front line and will return to its original role of the mediator behind the scene. Washington's gradual hands-off attitude was evident in its response to former President Lee Teng-hui's recent remarks. The United States clearly turned down an offer by Lee that said 'the appropriate venue for negotiating cross-Strait ties lies is the United States, not Beijing.' In addition, Washington stressed that the best way to resolve cross-Strait tension is to resume dialogue directly and that the United States welcomes any steps that would help achieve such an objective. Moreover, Washington said that it does not rely on the United States to solve all these problems. .

". If our government mishandles the opposition leaders' trip to China, it will not only miss an excellent opportunity to be able to take the initiative in improving cross-Strait ties but will also likely spoil Washington's hard efforts in pushing for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume dialogue. From this, [we can say] the United States' influence on both sides of the Taiwan Strait is increasing rather than diminishing. How can Taiwan not act carefully [with regard to the U.S. role and cross-Strait relations]?"

KEEGAN